

opportunities that are compatible with each refuge's establishing purposes and the mission of the NWRs.

Additional Information

The draft CCP/EIS for Conte NFWR, which includes detailed information about the planning process, refuge, issues, and management alternatives considered and proposed, may be found at http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Silvio_O_Conte/what_we_do/conservation.html. There are four alternative refuge management options considered in the draft plan. The Service's preferred alternative is alternative C.

The alternatives analyzed in detail include:

- **Alternative A—Current Management:** This alternative represents continuing current management and serves as a baseline for comparing the other alternatives. Under this alternative, we would continue our current habitat and visitor services management activities on existing refuge lands. We would also continue to work with our existing partners throughout the Connecticut River Watershed (watershed) to support our conservation, education, and recreation programs. We would continue to actively manage forest habitats on the Nulhegan Basin Division (Vermont) to benefit forest-dependent species of conservation concern, and manage grasslands and shrublands habitats on our Pondicherry (New Hampshire) and Fort River (Massachusetts) Divisions for species dependent on those habitats. We would maintain our hunting and fishing programs on refuge lands, which generally are managed consistent with respective State regulations. We would also continue to acquire lands from willing sellers under our existing approved land acquisition authority of approximately 98,000 acres. Our focus would continue to be on acquiring lands that were identified in the refuge's 1995 Master Plan and its accompanying EIS.

- **Alternative B—Consolidated Stewardship:** This alternative would strategically focus our work with partners, and our staffing, funding, and other resource commitments across the watershed, in 14 defined geographic areas called Conservation Partnership Areas (CPAs). CPAs are large areas, defined by sub-watersheds, with concentrations of high-value habitat for fish and wildlife. Within CPAs, we have identified a total of 18 areas we call Conservation Focus Areas (CFAs). These are areas with particularly high value to Federal trust resources and represent where we would focus our future refuge land acquisition. Under alternative B, we would not seek to expand the refuge

beyond our current acreage authority. Instead, we propose to focus acquisition in CFAs rather than in the smaller, scattered areas proposed in the refuge's 1995 Master Plan and EIS. Under alternative B, we would expand our current wildlife habitat and visitor services management activities to other refuge divisions, and support those same opportunities within CPAs on other ownerships across the watershed.

- **Alternative C—Enhanced Conservation Connections and Partnerships (Service's Preferred Alternative):** Similar to alternative B, we would prioritize our work with partners in CPAs, and focus future refuge acquisitions in CFAs. However, under alternative C, we would seek to expand the refuge's approved acquisition authority in the watershed up to approximately 197,000 acres. The expanded network of 17 CPAs and 22 CFAs would allow for greater flexibility and opportunity for us to work with partners to achieve common conservation goals. We would be a more significant contributor to a well-connected conserved lands network in the watershed. Under alternative C, we would be able to increase our benefits to species of conservation concern by managing more acres of habitat with better distribution across the watershed. Expanding the refuge land base would also enhance our ability to address, and adapt our management to, climate change. We would be able to provide more public access for compatible recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and photography. We would also expand our education and interpretive programs with an emphasis on engaging urban communities.

- **Alternative D—Conservation Connections Emphasizing Natural Processes:** Similar to alternative C, we would prioritize our work both on and off refuge lands in the same 17 CPAs, and would focus refuge acquisition in the same 22 CFAs. However, under alternative D, we would further expand individual CFAs and seek additional acquisition authority of up to approximately 236,000 acres. The increased acres would further enhance the refuge's capability to establish connections in the watershed's conserved lands network, and would strengthen our ability to adapt refuge lands to climate change. A major difference between alternatives C and D is that alternative D proposes to limit active habitat management. We would only intervene in natural processes when a federally listed species is in jeopardy, or a major wildfire or pest outbreak occurs and restoration is a

critical need. Under alternative D, we would be able to provide more public access due to the increased land base, but our visitor services programs would emphasize a reduced human footprint, with a focus on backcountry opportunities and fewer developed areas.

Public Involvement

We will give the public an opportunity to ask questions and obtain more information about the draft plan at our informal public meetings. We will take oral testimony at the formal public hearings. You can obtain the schedule for meetings and the hearings, and find the address for submitting your comments, from the address or Web site listed in this notice (see **ADDRESSES**). You may also submit written comments anytime during the comment period.

Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Dated: June 3, 2015.

Wendi Weber,

Regional Director, Northeast Region.

[FR Doc. 2015–20184 Filed 8–17–15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS–HQ–ES–2015–N158;
FGES111309WLLF0 156]

Proposed Information Collection; Wolf-Livestock Demonstration Project Grant Program

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) will ask the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to approve the information collection (IC) described below. As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and as part of our continuing efforts to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, we invite the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on this IC. This IC is scheduled to expire on December

31, 2015. We may not conduct or sponsor and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

DATES: To ensure that we are able to consider your comments on this IC, we must receive them by October 19, 2015.

ADDRESSES: Send your comments on the IC to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803 (mail); or hope_grey@fws.gov (email). Please include "1018-0154" in the subject line of your comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To request additional information about this IC, contact Hope Grey at hope_grey@fws.gov (email) or 703-358-2482 (telephone).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

Subtitle C of Title VI of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Act; Pub. L. 111-11) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a Wolf-Livestock Demonstration Project Grant Program (WLDPGP) to:

- Assist livestock producers in undertaking proactive, nonlethal activities to reduce the risk of livestock loss due to predation by wolves; and
- Compensate livestock producers for livestock losses due to such predation.

The Act directs that the program be established as a grant program to provide funding to States and tribes, that the Federal cost-share not exceed

50 percent, and that funds be expended equally between the two purposes. The Act included an authorization of appropriations up to \$1 million each fiscal year for 5 years. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Program will allocate the funding as competitively awarded grants to States and tribes with a prior history of wolf depredation. States with delisted wolf populations are eligible for funding, provided that they meet the eligibility criteria contained in Public Law 111-11.

The following additional criteria apply to all WLDPGP grants and must be satisfied for a project to receive WLDPGP funding:

- A proposal cannot include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service full-time equivalent (FTE) costs.
- A proposal cannot seek funding for projects that serve to satisfy regulatory requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), including complying with a biological opinion under section 7 or fulfilling commitments of a habitat conservation plan (HCP) under section 10, or for projects that serve to satisfy other Federal regulatory requirements (e.g., mitigation for Federal permits).
- State administrative costs must be assumed by the State or included in the proposal in accordance with Federal requirements.

We will publish notices of funding availability on the Grants.gov Web site at <http://www.grants.gov>, as well as in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance at <http://cfda.gov>. To compete for grant funds, eligible States and tribes must submit an application that describes in substantial detail

project locations, project resources, future benefits, and other characteristics that meet the Wolf-Livestock Demonstration Project Grant Program purposes as listed above. In accordance with the Act, States and tribes that receive a grant must:

- Maintain files of all claims received under programs funded by the grant, including supporting documentation; and
- Submit an annual report that includes a summary of claims and expenditures under the program during the year and a description of any action taken on the claims.

Materials that describe the program and assist applicants in formulating project proposals will be available on our Web site at www.fws.gov/grants. Persons who do not have access to the Internet may obtain instructional materials by mail.

II. Data

- OMB Control Number:* 1018-0154.
- Title:* Wolf-Livestock Demonstration Project Grant Program.
- Service Form Number:* None.
- Type of Request:* Extension of a currently approved collection.
- Description of Respondents:* States and Indian tribes.
- Respondent's Obligation:* Required to Obtain or Retain a Benefit.
- Estimated Number of Annual Respondents:* 10.
- Frequency of Collection:* On occasion.
- Estimated Annual Nonhour Burden Cost:* None.

| Activity | Number of responses | Completion time per response | Total annual burden hours |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Applications | 10 | 8 hours | 80 |
| Reports and Recordkeeping | 10 | 14 hours | 140 |
| Totals | 20 | | 220 |

III. Comments

We invite comments concerning this information collection on:

- Whether or not the collection of information is necessary, including whether or not the information will have practical utility;
- The accuracy of our estimate of the burden for this collection of information;
- Ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We will include or summarize each comment in our request to OMB to approve this IC. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we

cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Dated: August 13, 2015.

Tina A. Campbell,
Chief, Division of Policy, Performance, and Management Programs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 2015-20334 Filed 8-17-15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P